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ORIGIN PM-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 EA-06 ISO-00 AF-04 NEA-06 IO-04 SP-02

CIAE-00 DODE-00 H-01 INR-05 L-01 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 ACDA-05 /076 R

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

CINCUSNAVEUR

CINCLANT

CINCEUR

S E C R E T STATE 243639

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, UK, US, XO

SUBJECT: DEBRIEF ON US-UK INDIAN OCEAN TALKS

REF: STATE 241093

MILITARY ADDEES FOR POLAD

1. AS FORECAST IN REFTEL, DEPTOFFS SEPARATELY DEBRIEFED
JAPANESE, AUSTRALIAN, AND NEW ZEALAND EMBOFFS ON NOVEMBER

1 CONCERNING SUBSTANCE OF RECENT US-UK TALKS ON INDIAN
OCEAN AREA, ON CONFIDENTIAL BASIS. ALL THREE WERE AWARE

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OF SIMILAR TALKS LAST MAY AND WERE TOLD THAT LATEST

DISCUSSIONS REVIEWED DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THEN, WITH NO SURPRISES. AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS WERE BRIEFLY SUMMARIZED.

2. JAPANESE (COUNSELOR DONOWAKI AND FIRST SECY ONO)
QUERIED:

(A) WOULD SOVIET WARSHIP PRESENCE INCREASE ONCE SUEZ CANAL REOPENED? NOTED WE EXPECT SLOW, BUT STEADY, INCREASE IN SOVIET PRESENCE OVER NEXT FEW YEARS, BUT SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE NOT EXPECTED SINCE THEY HAVE HIGHER PRIORITIES ELSEWHERE AND ARE AWARE OF POLITICAL AND MILITARY VULNERABILITIES OF TOO LARGE A PRESENCE. ALSO NOTED

LESSENED SURGE TIMES AND OUR BELIEF SOVIETS WOULD PROBABLY BE ABLE TO LOWER THEIR SUPPORT SHIP/COMBATANT RATIO.

(B) STATUS OF BERBERA FACILITY. CLEARLY A SIGNIFICANT NAVAL SUPPORT FACILITY WITH COMMUNICATIONS STATION, EXPANDING POL STORAGE, HIGH NUMBER OF SOVIET PORT CALLS, SEQUESTERED PORT AREA, AND CONTINUED DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITY WHICH WE WILL WATCH CLOSELY.

(C) CURRENT SOVIET PRESENCE. TOTAL SHIPS HAVE TEMPORARILY DECREASED WITH RETURN OF HELICOPTER-CARRIER LENINGRAD TO ATLANTIC WATERS AND COMPLETED TRANSIT OF SECOND KRESTA II GUIDED MISSILE CRUISER TO PACIFIC.

(D) MAURITIUS. WE ARE CONCERNED, BUT NOT ACUTELY DISQUIETED, BY PM RAMGOOLAM'S RECENT NOISES IN OPPOSITION TO OUR DIEGO GARCIA PLANS, AND WILL WATCH DEVELOPMENTS CAREFULLY.

(E) DIEGO AND CONGRESS. WE ARE MODERATELY HOPEFUL OF A FAVORABLE OUTCOME AFTER THE ELECTION RECESS.

(F) PERIM ISLAND. WE ARE WATCHING ACTIVITIES IN THIS RED SEA CHOKE POINT AREA AND WOULD BE CONCERNED -- AS WE IMAGINE OTHERS WOULD BE -- IF ANY MOVES BROUGHT FREE TRANSIT INTO QUESTION.

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3. AUSTRALIAN (COUNSELOR MCKEOWN) RAISED:

(A) ARMS LIMITATION. WE INDICATED THAT FINAL U.S. POSITION HAD YET TO BE DEVELOPED ON THIS MATTER BUT, WHEN IT WAS, GOA WOULD OF COURSE BE ADVISED.

(B) IRAN. WHILE SHAH INDEED "SPREADING HIS WINGS,"

WE GENERALLY DO NOT SEE HIS ACTIVITIES IN CONFLICT WITH OURS IN SHORT TERM; LONGER RANGE BEARS WATCHING. NOTED THAT SHAH CHOSE AUSTRALIA FOR HIS FIRST PUBLIC COMMENT (FAVORABLE) ON OUR DIEGO PLANS.

(C) STATUS OF UK DEFENSE REVIEW. WE FINESSED SPECULATION ON THIS QUESTION BY SAYING MATTER NOT DISCUSSED IN CONTEXT OF BILATERAL TALKS, ALTHOUGH WE ASSUMED REVIEW PROBABLY NEARING COMPLETION.

4. NEW ZEALANDERS (MINISTER ATKINS AND COUNSELOR POWLES) RAISED:

(A) EXPANDING SOVIET INTERESTS? WE NOTED IT IS

CONCEIVABLE THAT SOVIETS MAY SEEK TO EXPLOIT VARIOUS ,TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY" WHICH COULD PROMISE SOME POTENTIAL FOR SUCCESS -- NAMELY MOZAMBIQUE, MAURITIUS, OR SEYCHELLES -- THOUGH WE HAVE NO FIRM INDICATIONS OF THIS AND ARE NOT CONVINCED THAT SOVIETS CONSIDER MAKING HEAVY POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INVESTMENT, TO SECURE LODGMENTS FOR THEIR MILITARY PRESENCE IN SOUTHWESTERN INDIAN OCEAN, OF HIGH PRIORITY.

(B) MAURITIUS. SAME AS 2(D) ABOVE.

(C) SOVIET INTENTIONS. CLEARLY, SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE NOT TEMPORARY. ALSO REPEATED COMMENTS UNDER 2(A) AND 2(B) ABOVE.

5. ALL THREE WERE TOLD THAT WE CONTINUE TO CONSIDER OUR DIEGO PLANS TO BE OF CONSIDERABLE PRIORITY IN SUPPORT OF OUR MUTUAL SECURITY INTERESTS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN
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AREA, AND THAT THE UK SIDE GAVE US NO REASON TO BELIEVE THEY DID NOT AGREE. WE ALSO NOTED THAT WE HAD ASSURED THE BRITISH WE DID NOT ENVISAGE ANY FURTHER EXPANSION BEYOND PLANS ALREADY COMMUNICATED TO THEM.

6. ALL WERE CURIOUS ABOUT RECENT FRENCH NAVAL DEPLOYMENT AND WHAT IT INDICATED RE FRENCH LONGER-TERM OBJECTIVES. WE NOTED THOUGHT THAT FRANCE PROBABLY WISHED TO SIGNAL ITS CONTINUING INTEREST IN THE AREA AND ITS DESIRE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT INDIAN OCEAN NOT SIMPLY US/USSR/UK NAVAL PRESERVE.

7. ALL WERE INFORMED, ON CONFIDENTIAL BASIS, OF UPCOMING USS CONSTELLATION TASK GROUP DEPLOYMENT (SEPTEL). INGERSOLL

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